

**Neighborhood Conservation District Commission
Minutes of the July 15, 2013 Meeting
Town Hall, 333 Washington Street, Room 111**

Commissioners Present

Mark Allen
James Batchelor
Paul Bell
Eleanor Demont
Stephen Chiumenti
Deborah Goldberg

Richard Garver
David King
Robin Koocher
Joyce Stavis-Zak
Dennis DeWitt

Absent: None

Staff: Polly Selkoe, Maria Morelli

Members of the Public: Anthony Asner, Evelyn Berman, Kenneth Berman, Regina Frawley, Nancy Fulton, Gayle Halfond, Alisa Jonas, Judi Leichtner

Chair Paul Bell began the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Discussion and Approval of the June 24, 2013 Minutes

Paul Bell recommended the following changes:

Lines 50 – 52: Delete “Mr. Chiumenti, Mr. DeWitt, Mr. Garver, and possibly Ms. Koocher and Ms. Goldberg volunteered to review the earlier materials and additional comments.”

Lines 78 – 79:

Change: “A subcommittee was formed to develop a preliminary document: Mr. Garver, Mr. DeWitt, Ms. Goldberg, Mr. Bell.”

To read: “A subcommittee was formed to develop a preliminary document: Mr. Batchelor, Mr. DeWitt, Ms. Goldberg, Mr. King, Ms. Koocher, and Mr. Bell.”

Voted Deborah Goldberg made the motion to approve the minutes of June 24, 2013, with the recommended revisions; Robin Koocher seconded.

Discussion of Hancock Village Revised (2013) Proposal

Polly Selkoe, Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning, presented an overview of Chestnut Hill Realty’s revised proposal. (Preservation Planner Greer Hardwicke is on medical leave.) Maria Morelli was introduced as the Interim Regulatory Planner for the project.

Developer Chestnut Hill Realty (CHR) withdrew its 2012 Proposal to Mass Development but has since submitted a revised proposal. The Town’s response to the 2012 Proposal highlighted several matters inadequately addressed in the developer’s application (such as design, scale, location) and that the developer did not specify zoning regulations from which it wanted relief.

CHR submitted a revised proposal in June 2013. The Town asked for and received an extension from MassDevelopment to submit its response to the 2013 Proposal. The Town’s response is due August 30, 2013, instead of August 12.

Polly also specified that Planning staff will try to provide additional information on the plans in time for the NCD Commission meeting scheduled at the end of July for public comments on the proposal.

Brief Overview of Changes to 2013 Proposal

	2013 Proposal	2012 Proposal
Architectural style	More traditional; peaked roofs	Modern style; flat roof on apartment bldg.
Number of units	192	271
Town houses	76	126
Apartment Bldg	116	145
Parking spaces per dwelling unit	1.78 spaces/d.u.	1.64 spaces/d.u.
Parking facilities	Above-ground garages * added to buffer zone	More below-ground parking
Number of stories, height	2.5 story townhouses 4 story apartment bldg Varies, under 35' claimed	3 story townhouses 5 story apartment bldg Claimed: 43' townhouses 35-70' apartment bldg
Treatment of greenspace buffer zone	2013 plans still call for development in buffer zone. Buildings appear to be larger, and more above-ground garages are planned. These structures have been added to buffer zone.	

*For apartment building, 2013 Proposal appears to plan excavation where a hill currently exists (to lower the grade) and elimination of previously planned below-ground parking to accommodate Town's concern of building's excessive height in 2012 Proposal.

Questions and Responses

Commission members had several questions regarding the proposed project, the drawings, and the existing site and regulations:

Where is the buffer zone?

The buffer zone is the existing greenspace abutting Beverly Road and Russet Road properties. Both the 2012 and 2013 proposals plan development in the buffer zone.

Where is the Boston property line?

City of Boston portion begins roughly at Sherman Road. The proposed project is planned for the area situated in Brookline.

Will the existing grade be changed?

Plans appear to indicate excavation of the hill on which the proposed apartment building will be sited. We need to further examine other possible changes to existing grade.

Is the Commonwealth of Massachusetts the authority that specifies what is a road versus a driveway?

Polly Selkoe indicated that it would be governed by Town regulations and that the Brookline Director of Traffic and Engineering would be involved in this decision.

How will traffic issues be assessed?

Brookline's Transportation Department will provide comments to be included in the Town's Response.

Comments and Outstanding Questions

1. The 2013 Proposal appears “more egregious”—with larger buildings and above-ground garages, especially in buffer zone. Overall, Commission and residents who attended object to development in the buffer zone.
2. The revised proposal overall does not meet the concerns the Town presented in its Response to the 2012 Proposal.
3. Structures in the buffer zone appear to be shoe-horned, oriented to fit the maximum built-out space rather than thoughtfully sited in relation to surrounding structures.
4. Developer never met with Mass Development (as far as Town knows) or the NCD Commission, which shows an unwillingness to meet Town’s concerns.
5. Drawings are not clear. Polly Selkoe acknowledged that the 2013 plans did not convey key information. Some areas that need clarifying:
 - **Cross-sections:** Sections lines need to be better specified. Also, are the cross-sections of the plans illustrating the maximum or minimum space between proposed structures and existing structures? We possibly need more cross-sections to discern minimum space between structures.
 - **Orientation of front and rear façades:** Plans and elevations do not confirm for us the orientation of these façades. For example, it appears in the 2012 Proposal that the front façades of the townhouses in the West parcel face away from Beverly Road and toward the Hancock Village community. In the 2013 Proposal, were the front and rear façades switched to better meet setback requirements?
 - **Setbacks:** Subsequently, it is not clear what the setbacks are to Beverly Road and Russet Road.
 - **Driveway/Roadway:** What are proposed widths of newly added traffic access?
 - **Height:** Dimension labels are not provided on plans to indicate how the height was measured.
 - **FAR:** No calculations broken out or FARs specified.
7. What other changes are planned for the existing grade?

Additional Considerations for Response to Mass Development

Identify specifically how the proposal does not meet both the concerns mentioned in Town’s Response to 2012 Proposal and the issues that an NCD is designed to address.

Examine proposed changes to grading.

NCD Commission Subcommittee

The NCD Commission agreed that a subcommittee would be created to review the 2013 Proposal and draft a critique, especially in regard to whether the developer has met the concerns outlined in the Town's response to the 2012 Proposal. Provided as a reference are the design review guidelines featured in the "Handbook: Approach to Chapter 40B Design Reviews." Although the public is invited, this is a working meeting of the subcommittee.

Appointed Members:

James Batchelor
Stephen Chiumenti
Dennis DeWitt
Deborah Goldberg
David King
Robin Koocher

Date/Time for Subcommittee Meeting: Tuesday, July 23, 2013, at 5:30 pm.
[Location: Town Hall, Room 111]

Next NCD Commission Meeting

Objective: To review the 2013 Proposal and collect comments from the public.

Note Date Change: Wednesday, July 31 at 7 pm. [Location: Town Hall, Room 103]

NCD Guidelines

It was generally agreed that developing general NCD guidelines can be postponed until September. The purpose of the guidelines is to establish reviewable elements and exempt items, should additional NCDs be created. The revised timeframe will enable the Commission to prioritize the analysis of the 2013 Hancock Village 40B Proposal.

There being no new business, Paul Bell adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Morelli
Interim Regulatory Planner

July 17, 2013

Approved July 31, 2013